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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

SPAIN'S POTENTIALITIES IN WESTERN DEFENSE

NIE-34

The intelligence organizations of the Department of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff participated in the preparation of this estimate. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 26 July.

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SPAIN'S POTENTIALITIES IN WESTERN DEFENSE

THE PROBLEM

To estimate, in the light of the US decision to associate Spain with the Western defense effort, the contributions which Spain can make to US security and the defense of Western Europe and the Mediterranean, as well as to examine the military, political, and economic problems involved in associating Spain with the Western defense effort.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The strategic position of Spain makes it of great potential importance in Western defense, especially as a base of operations for air and naval forces.
2. For immediate employment, Spain could contribute some air and naval base facilities.
3. With US help the Spanish armed forces could overcome present deficiencies in training and equipment, and could make an important contribution to Western defense forces.
4. Extensive use of Spain as a US base of operations, or a substantial Spanish contribution in men and materials to the Western defense effort, would require corresponding US economic as well as military assistance, the extent of which we are not now able to determine.
5. We believe that Spanish membership in NATO is at present not feasible.
6. We believe that US efforts to develop the military potentialities of Spain within the concept of Western defense would create political difficulties, but would not constitute a threat to the existence of NATO.

DISCUSSION

Potential Contributions of Spain to Western Defense

1. By far the most important asset of Spain, from the point of view of Western defense, is its strategic location. Use of the Iberian Peninsula, or denial of its facilities to the USSR, is of obvious importance to Western defense. The peninsula dominates the western entrance to the Mediterranean, flanks the Atlantic approaches to Western Europe, and lies on the normal air routes connecting Western Europe with South America and Africa. Its rugged terrain offers strong defensive capabilities.

Bases can be developed in Spain which would be a very effective supplement to those in North Africa and the UK. The Pyrenees along the northern land frontier provide a natural defense line. Either the entire peninsula, or some coastal portion of it, could become a defensible redoubt or beachhead if the remainder of Europe were overrun by Soviet forces. Development during peacetime of facilities, bases, and communications in the peninsula would greatly facilitate its use in war.

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2. At the present time airfields at Madrid and Valencia are capable of supporting sustained heavy bomber, medium bomber, and jet fighter operations. Four other fields can support limited medium bomber operations. Four sea-plane bases, now in operation, three of them outside Spain proper, are strategically located for anti-submarine operations. Spain has three principal naval bases, each capable at present of giving limited logistical support to Western fleets. Spain has a sizeable labor force which could be effectively employed at the bases. Some local materials would be available for immediate use. There is a good telecommunications network.

3. The Spanish Army consists of 335,000 men organized into 18 divisions. It is not trained in the use of modern equipment, but this deficiency could be remedied with US assistance. Franco has said that if his army were in proper condition he would be willing to send a substantial force abroad to fight against the USSR. The Spanish Army could certainly be depended upon to defend the Pyrenees line against foreign invaders. It is at present capable of doing so against a major enemy only for a few weeks, but its capabilities in this respect could be increased. Spain could mobilize an army of probably a million and a half, but the country is quite incapable of supporting such a large force without extensive outside aid.

4. The combat effectiveness of the Spanish Air Force is negligible; it would have to be almost entirely reconstituted before it could be effectively employed in Western defense. The personnel, organization, and facilities of the Spanish Air Force could be employed as a nucleus for this purpose. The Spanish Navy is composed of a small number of surface craft

and a few submarines. It lacks modern equipment, but its personnel are well-trained in the use of the equipment it has, and the Navy would be useful in patrol duties after being given modern equipment and trained in its use.

5. Spain has several raw materials of great value: tungsten ore, mercury, lead, and strontium. It produces a good quality of iron ore and has the largest known deposits of iron pyrites. The exportable surpluses of all these materials are presently available to the Western Powers, and production of most of them could be substantially increased. Spain produces about 85 percent of its domestic coal requirements (it has no coking coal) and has large deposits of potash. Copper and tin are also found, but the production of these metals, and of cement, is not at present sufficient to meet domestic requirements. The Spanish textile industry, if assured raw materials and new equipment, is of sufficient importance to make some contribution to the Western defense effort. Spanish plants can manufacture most of the less complicated items of military equipment.

6. The Franco government in some respects could be an asset in the utilization of Spanish potentialities in the Western defense effort. The government and people are profoundly anti-Communist. No other Western European government is as likely to give full weight to military considerations in the anti-Communist struggle or to be less hampered by ideological controversies. No Western country has consistently spent a larger share of its national budget upon the armed forces. The decisions of the central government are not likely to meet with administrative obstruction at lower levels.

Stability of the Spanish Government

7. We believe that the present regime is in effective control of Spain, and is likely to retain effective control, especially if it receives US aid. The Spanish people profoundly fear another civil war, they are disarmed, and Franco continues to receive the support he needs from the Army, the Catholic hierarchy,

the Falange, and the industrial interests. Even a small amount of US economic assistance would afford immediate relief of the popular misery which is currently the most important cause of unrest.

8. Worsening economic conditions have driven a large segment of the Spanish population to

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the point of despair. The recent strike wave was almost certainly an expression of the temper of those people; but the strikes do not appear to have shaken the regime. The Monarchist opposition, while large and vocal, is more likely to effect an alliance with the Franco government than to push its opposition to support of revolution. The left republicans, the socialists, the anarchists, and the Basque and Catalan separatists are, collectively, numerous. However, they are not capable of sustained united action, they lack effective organization, and most of their leaders are in exile. The Spanish Communist Party (PCE) with a present total estimated membership of 10,000-15,000 is now politically

ineffectual, due largely to the overwhelmingly anti-Communist sentiments of the Spanish people, Franquists, and anti-Franquists alike. The future potential of the Spanish Communist Party is highly uncertain and will depend primarily on the course of action of the leftist but presently anti-Communist forces of opposition. In the event of war, the Communists might provide ready-made cadres for sabotage and guerrilla action; these cadres could be swelled by an estimated 100,000 Communist sympathizers and by a number of the more ardent members of clandestine labor organizations who, despite their hatred of Communism, might feel impelled to join the forces most active against France.

Problems in Realizing the Spanish Potential Contribution

9. Spain is a country with moderate resources but its current economic situation is bad. Recovery from the destruction of the Civil War was retarded first by World War II, then by the political and economic isolation to which Spain was subsequently subjected, as well as by certain policies and practices carried out within Spain. Spain enjoyed none of the advantages of US economic aid which hastened the recovery of other Western European countries. These difficulties were not surmounted, and Spain continues in a state of economic emergency. The consequence is that until the economy is revived with US assistance, no appreciable additional share of the Spanish national product can be diverted to purposes of defense, whether directly in appropriations for the armed forces, or indirectly in measures for the improvement of the economy.

10. From the point of view of Western defense, the main physical difficulty in realizing a Spanish contribution to the common effort is probably to be found in the condition of the Spanish transportation system. The railroads of Spain are unquestionably the worst in Western Europe; the highways are totally inadequate for modern military traffic. Bases on the seacoast would not be seriously hindered by these deficiencies, but US bases in the interior could not depend, as for example they largely can in Britain, upon the already

existing roads and railways. Effective defense of the Pyrenees would require a considerable reconstruction of railways and highways. The Spanish Government, from its own resources, is quite unable to carry out any adequate program to rehabilitate transportation facilities. Such improvements, and any others to mines or factories from which increased production is desired, would require substantial US aid.

11. In the administration of a program of US economic aid to Spain, mismanagement and waste are to be expected, and are apt to be more marked than in other Western European countries. Furthermore, the Franco regime and the Spanish people will undoubtedly render close US supervision of any aid program difficult, and will try to keep US influence within Spain at a minimum. Despite these difficulties, we believe that an economic aid program could be successfully carried out.

12. It will probably not be difficult to procure from the Spanish Government long-term rights of developing and using certain bases and base sites. General Franco has already signified his willingness to bear a part in the anti-Communist effort and has engaged in military conversations with US representatives. He will of course make the best bargain he can. He will expect to receive substantial economic aid and military equipment,

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but he also seeks the increased stability and international prestige which US assistance will give his regime. Therefore the initial terms are not likely to be onerous.

13. In most NATO countries there is still strong opposition to any alliance or close association with Spain, and suspicion of US moves to give economic or military assistance to Franco. In part this attitude arises from the almost pathological distaste for the Franco regime which still inspires important sections of the populations of Western Europe. It is reinforced by two other opinions of a different nature: (1) that any US aid given to Spain is subtracted from the aid available for NATO powers; and (2) that in building up Spain the US is demonstrating an intention to abandon the rest of Europe to Soviet invasion, and to fix a defense line at the Pyrenees.

14. Neither the British nor the French Government will allow even a US-Spanish base agreement to pass without protest. We believe that Spain's admission to NATO is at present not feasible. While, however, a closer defense connection between the US and Spain would meet with opposition in the NATO countries, we do not believe this opposition would constitute a threat to the existence of NATO.

15. The admission of Franco Spain to NATO may well become feasible at a later date. Professional military men in Western Europe, as well as civilians accustomed to military problems, are already aware of the contributions which Spain could make to the common defense. Popular opposition to an alliance is likely to decline as more normal associations with Spain increase.

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